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Souls

AND OTHER POEMS

GLENN HUGHES

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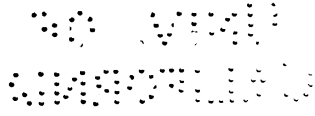

TO MY STEPMOTHER
CORA BROUGHTON HUGHES
WHO FILLED MY CHILDHOOD WITH POETRY
AND WHOSE LOVE AND PATIENCE
HAVE BEEN
MIRACLES IN MY LIFE

369938

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Souls and Other Poems

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

Souls

When I have vanished from the ranks of men
And joined the greater caravan
That treads far spaces,
I wonder, O Beloved of the earth, what you
will be to me.

I think I shall forget the rose—
Dear, delicate brother of the soil;
I think I shall forget the sea—
Grey, wild waste of mystery;
I think I shall forget the fields—
Wide, warm cradle of the living;
These are of the earth, as is my body.

But how, Beloved, when I join the caravan,
Can my immortal soul forget its light,
Transcendent beauty of a kindred sort,
Flaming through the corridors of being
Alive, ever alive!
Spark of the white, imperishable light
Burning in the hand of God?

Carmel Valley—A Memory

To A. V.

The moon last night took me away
  A thousand miles from here;
To where a silent valley lay
  And where the sea was near.

Along the hill a white road ran,
  It twisted, rose and fell;
I could not see where it began,
  Its end I could not tell.

And somewhere there was lilac wild,
  It drifted on the air;
That may be why the pale moon smiled
  And why the stars were fair.

Across the valley, dim below,
  A wavering night-wind crept;
And stirred the grasses to and fro—
  They murmured as they slept.

Far down the little river dreamed,
  And glided to the sea;
It sang no song, but rather seemed
  Blind to its destiny.

And ere it reached the thin white line
That glinted on the shore,
A pallid mist, silken and fine,
The sea sent on before.

It wrapped the river in its arms,
And kissed its languid eyes;
With warm breath and with drowsy charms
It stilled the river's sighs.

And so the river died in sleep,
Murmuring not a word;
Only the grasses cared to weep—
Their tears the night-wind heard.

The white road lay along the hill,
The moon took me away;
I could have wept—I could weep still,
I wanted so to stay.

Morning Song

Awake! awake!
For Dawn has scaled the battlements of Night
And lo! the East is glorified with light!
Awake! awake!

Yo-ho! yo-ho!
Come o'er the sea—there is a merry gale!
Come o'er the land—wild flowers are in the vale!
Yo-ho! yo-ho!

Ha-ha! ha-ha!
This wine of life is ah! so sweet to sip!
That Death shall find—a smile upon my lip!
Ha-ha! ha-ha!

The Burden Bearer

You ask why poets seem so old and grave,
And why their forms are very often bent—
Their faces furrowed, eyes deep with intent
And lights that speak of many things they crave
And cannot find. And so you ask what gave
These strange appearances—what fires God sent
Through human mind and limb that could have lent
Outward distortions when the soul was brave.

Ah, have you seen the twisted cypress tree,
Bearing the sorrows of a thousand years?
The poet stands upon a high, bare point,
And, like the cypress, listens to the sea—
A sea made out of myriad human tears,
That rise about him, and his feet anoint.

The Element Shop

Have you ever heard tell of the Element Shop
Away out where the West and the East both
stop,
And the old world knows neither bottom nor
top?
'Tis a wonderful place to see;

For the walls of the Shop are the great Four
Winds,
With a pattern of lightning that flares and
blinds,
And the ceiling is thunder that roars and
grinds,
As it rolls like a mad sound-sea.

And the rain plays tag with the flashing
sunbeams,
And the snow whirls softly beneath the moon's
gleams,
While light winds are passing—light winds of
our dreams—
Wildly happy to play so free.

In the Element Shop all the Elements play,
And they know not nor care to know Night
from Day,
As they wait the summons that calls them
away—
'Tis a summons they cannot flee.

The Gods of the Universe barter and sell,
And the Elements follow their biddings well
From uppermost Heaven to nethermost Hell—
And the Gods chuckle loud with glee.

Ah! the Element Shop is a wonderful shop,
Away out where the West and the East both
stop,
And the old world knows neither bottom nor
top—
But alas! only God can see!

Understanding Never

You who are ever sweeping ahead of me,
Tell me—what are you?

I have seen you in the form of fresh flowers
Waving in the hill-wind.
I have seen you rising in grey folds, with blue
lustre in your eyes, and a red flare on
your lips,
When I have gazed at fire.
I have seen you rocking in the white spray
under the sun,
When I have looked to sea.

And ever, waking or sleeping, sorrowful or
mad with joy, my heart sings with a
music
Made for you,
And which I can never understand.

A Las Novias Tristes

Cuento de Labios en Flor

From the Spanish of Martinez Sierra

Haste! for the servant has brought
  Shrouds for the burial. Lo!
Petals of Jasmine have caught
Snow-like on foliage, and naught
  Breathes but of death and of woe.

Maker of Coffins, prepare,
  Seek in the forests of pine,
Wood filled with odors so rare,
Breathing of Spring, sweet and fair—
  Soft for the dead to recline.

Build you the coffin with nails
  Molded of silver, and bright.
Then with the sound of the flail
Let free the heart-piercing wail,
  Prayer to the Powers of the Night.

Late in the night do you creep
  Where 'neath the black coffins' top
Both of the dead maidens sleep;
Pluck from the sky's bluest deep,
  Stars—'tween their lips let them drop.

Call back the maidens in dreams,
Back to the warm April morns,
Back to the golden sun's beams,
Back to the morning dew's gleams—
Sounding the tabor and horns.

Ah! that between shrouds so drear,
Beauteous Virgins should lie!
Maker of Coffins, build here
Two caskets, rich-carved, a bier
Fashioned to hold the most high.

Line them with silk, soft and fine—
Both, let them both be the same;
Each is of Springtime a sign.
Deck them with jewels that shine—
Splendor, they each shall proclaim.

One shall be carvéd for Rose,
One more for Blanche shall be made;
One shall be white, and pale rose,
One shall be white as the snows,
Rose-tinted—neither shall fade.

Caskets, pink-white, to be wrought.
Builder of Coffins, make haste—
Haste! for the shrouds have been brought,
Petals of Jasmine have caught
Snow-like on foliage—make haste!

Roles

When the winds blow and men go
  Down to the sea and out on the sea in
    ships,
When the night cries with its blind eyes
  And a moan is trembling on its icy lips,
I am asking in my own heart
What is my part?

For there's warmth here, and there's no fear
  Of the waves' slash or the wild wind that
    comes riding;
In a white light there's no fright,
  And in a city house there's no terror hiding.
That's why it's hard to say:
"Things should be this way."

J'ai Cherche Trente Ans, Mes Soeurs

(I Have Searched Thirty Years, My Sisters)
From the French of Maurice Maeterlinck

Thirty years have I searched, sisters,
Ah! where can it be?
Thirty years have I searched, sisters,
Still it eludes me.

Thirty years have I marched, sisters,
Tired my feet, and sore.
It was everywhere, my sisters,
Now it is no more.

That sad hour has come, my sisters,
Lay my sandals by—
E'en the evening dies, my sisters,
Sick at heart am I.

Thou art now sixteen, my sisters,
Follow then roads new.
Take my pilgrim staff, my sisters,
Go! and search thou, too.

La Flute Amere de L'Automne

(The Sad Flute of Autumn)
From the French of Andre Ferdinand Herold

The sad flute of the autumn wails
  Upon the dying eve;
The wet trees shiver, dead leaves fall—
  The very heavens grieve.

The wild flowers droop and gently die;
  The birds have flown. Alas!
Where can another April sing
  Its song through swaying grass?

And you, my soul, do pass, heart-sick,
  Forsaken paths along.
You seek, alas! pale traveler,
  In vain, the vanished song.

Ah, love, the songs which charmed us once,
  In autumn ne'er return—
Yet shall I not see those eyes laugh
  In which the tears now burn?

Monterey

To J. E. P.

A fishing fleet and a crooked street,
With a soldier at every bar;
A 'dobe wall, where the lizards crawl,
And a screechy, wobbly car.

A darksome sky with the fog blown high,
And a quiet, purple bay;
A Spanish song as we passed along—
And that was Monterey.

I Have Grown Very Tired

I have grown very tired
Of hearing Right and Wrong discussed
And disputed and modified
And discussed again.

So I have made up my mind
To talk no more about them
And to listen
To Truth
Which is within me.

Snow Falling

On the light wind from the great North is the
white snow riding, riding,
Silent as death, and sweet as virgin love;
Over the dark earth, where hideous things lie
sleeping,
Flutters the stainless garment of the heaven.

O love that in the lilac-blooming hours of
vagrant summers
Fell dimly star-like through the gorgeous
night,
How mercifully white and cool-breathed are
thy kisses,
Falling, falling, trembling in their imperishable
beauty,
Fluttering on the light wind of departing years,
Hovering immaculate, and descending
Softly, sweetly, ever white and ever caressing,
Upon my bitter heart, where sorrow sleeps.

Prayer of the Aesthete

Lord God who taught us how to rise
  Above dull mediocrity,
We thank Thee for the whitened skies
  That none but us can ever see.

It is not that we would look down
  In mockery on all the rest,
As wise man contemplates a clown,
  With sneer that kills the other's jest.

But merely this: who is the man
  That, tasting new and sweet delights,
Will fail to pity whom he can,
  And glory in his new-found rights?

'Tis seldom, Lord, that in this life
  There flashes out of dreary days
A joy as keen as any knife
  To cut us free from sodden ways.

But sometimes there is heard a song,
  Or, say, the sun has kissed the hills;
The moon gleams white and lingers long,
  Or maddened sea its hate distils.

Whate'er the pleasure, though 'tis brief,
The ecstacy is worth our pain,
One joy is worth a world of grief;
And all our waiting is not vain.

Lord God, we would not lose our power,
Though keener suffering is its price;
We are content to have our hour
Of finer joy—let that suffice.

And so we thank Thee, God of Light,
Who saves from mediocre Hell;
From out this whirling pit of night
We ask one thing: to live life well.

All Merry are the Lighted Streets Christmas Day

To O. E.

All merry are the lighted streets,
Full-throated is the song,
And the song is a carol.

I have wondered what it meant.
I have looked out over the sea when the mist
was upon it,
I have waited in the streets when men went by,
I have stared at the moon when it hung like a
Chinese lantern
And crinkled in the water between itself and
me;
I have seen the first snow,
And felt its white hand of beauty on my brow.

I have seen dull faces
And dull eyes,
And heard dull voices;
But they have changed.
And I know why most of them have
changed—
It is because work is over,

And there are things waiting to be eaten.
They are right to be happy.

But I, and others—few others and therefore
the wisest—
Have drawn another conclusion.
Here it is:
Pity has lighted another candle
(Love is the flame)
Along the road,
And though we know the road has no end,
We follow it—because it has no end.
And our eyes flash into the dark,
As though we desired to behold Truth
Naked, and all at once.
We know that it would strike us blind, yea,
obliterate us!
But the candle illuminates another hill,
And the road climbs up its side into the dark.
We follow!
It is our inheritance!
We know that there are candles to be lighted
on ahead!

Black and White

A crow and a dove sat on the selfsame tree.
"Caw!" said the crow.
"Coo!" said the dove.
Now the crow was all disheveled: he had been pelted
With rocks and divers missiles hurled in anger.
Not so the dove;
He sat serene: perhaps he contemplated
On a dove-like heaven, or else
A crow-like hell.

"Damnation!" cawed the crow. "This is your fault!
If you had never existed
With your whiteness and serenity
The world would never have known
That I was black, and a nuisance."

"Coo-o-o!" said the dove.

Revolt

Grey,
Dull, pallid, overhanging dreariness,
Bathing the room in a colorless desolation
Like the hue of a sickly, burnt-out soul.
Steam,
Hissing thinly, maliciously,
Like the gossip of sharp-nosed women
Who sit in their prim parlors.
Nothing else—
Oh, yes!
Click-clack, click-clack, click-clack, click-clack,
From the nickel-plated clock in the far
corner—
It seems to have grown into the room,
It is hard to be conscious of its flat, metallic
melody.
Great God! and this is life!
Life which I shall never live again!
Let me out! let me out!
Somewhere I shall find a flash of sunlight, or a
wild sweep of wind over a hill,
Or a maiden smiling.

Conviction

I am my own religion; you are yours.
Whatever gods we have we each have made.
And he who says to you, "Accept my god!"
Has said, "Accept me!" Thus is truth
betrayed.

And ever do men follow in the dark,
Burning a sacrifice to one before;
As though the past could hold eternity,
And future hold no wisdom in its store.

The present pulls, insistent, at our minds,
And crushes if we heed her not at all;
But what is she beside infinity?
A star that trembles, waiting but to fall.

And who am I to shape your destiny?
Alas, it seems men turn to gods, these days.
Solicitous god-fathers, shaping souls;
And pointing out the errors of our ways!

Small wonder that in all the long-dead years,
The path of life was lit by countless fires!
Fires fed by bodies of the men who *knew*,
And laughed aloud from sacrificial pyres.

I am my own religion; you are yours.
Whatever gods we have we each have made.
And fear not! When eternity revolves,
Be not of any other's god afraid.

A Conception

The things we should have done and did not do
  Array themselves like ghosts before our
    eyes.
And every morn that starts our life anew
  Brings on new ghosts to take us by surprise.

What shall we say? What is there to be said?
  We understood, and yet we did not act.
Shall we but hang a humble, contrite head,
  And pray for mercy to the All-wise Fact?

Or shall we throw regrets upon the wind,
  And face the future with a new-born sight?
Condemn the dusty past, and try to find
  A new eternity in every night?

This much we know: the soul is like a star,
  And is not made and unmade in an hour;
But stands against the winds that blast and
    scar,
  Like some divine, imperishable flower.

The things we might have done and did not do
Passed like the winds that blew from out the Space;
And lo! our souls that are no longer new
Turn forward each a strong and starlike face!

Transformation

Great God! was ever aught more fair
Than the virgin moon asleep in the tranquil
heavens?

From the harsh and troublous day
With its noises and its glamour
And its surge of human discord,
I escape to thee,
Mirror of my radiant soul,
And once more,
As if by a divine miracle,
I am made clean and holy and at peace with all
things.

Over Lummi

The steps of Night quicken,
The wind stills to a faint breath—
Cool from the high snow crevices of distant
hills;
Over the sea,
Where through the day the grey and purple
shadows have been dancing,
Comes a slow and soft-toned pink,
Flooding the waters
With its strange and delicate blushes,
Till they push upon the land,
And the slapping wavelets turn them back,
Piling them on each other
In rippling confusion.

See! up over the waves,
Out, far out through the hovering mist of
evening,
Flaring like a wound in the breast of heaven,
Crimson and gold, and dripping streams of
light
On the jagged and darkening island,
The Sun cries, "Hail! Farewell!"

Across the Sea

In the wild rain and the hot, pulsating sunlight
Of a southern island that is strange to me,
You sit, you girl with eager eyes,
And I remember
That all your dreams were woven of fine stuff,
Brocaded things that startled with their beauty.
But here in the far north,
Where grey is eternally on the land and on the sea,
I, too, have woven dreams not unlike yours;
And I am lifted up,
Burning with a new flame,
Inwardly exalted to a high heaven of understanding,
To know that space is nothing,
And that dreams are everything!

Illusion

I saw a star break through the evening sky,
And as it split the bowl of blue it said:
"Lo! night is come!"

I turned to where thou stood'st beside me
watching,
And looked within thine eyes;
And then I said:
"Beloved, the star spake a lie,
For behold! I see the day!"

I Have Builded a Citadel

I have builded a citadel round my heart;
Through the years of my youth eagerly have I builded,
And the citadel is of dreams,
And therefore strong.

Now at last I am sitting alone with the towers and minarets
Pricking the sky of my fancy.
A cloud passes.....

Hark! what is that at the gates?
It is not a clatter; it is not a booming; nor is it aught that I have ever heard before!
I thought at first it was music,
And then a wave of perfume,
Or the fluttering of leaves
In a midnight wind.
But the towers tremble,
And the lights in the minarets are shaken—
A star falls.....

Now I can hear it!
There are footsteps on the marble staircase,
Drawing nearer, nearer; they have almost
reached me—
I am struck blind with an exalted fear, a
divine grief!
Beloved!
The citadel is falling..... It is sacred dust at
our feet!
We will gather it up in our bare hands
And build an altar to Truth.

Song

Whenever I have seen a flower
  Kissed with summer dew
I've known that it was by God's power
  The tender blossom grew.

Whenever stars burst through the night
  All radiant and divine
I knew that God gave them their light
  And bade them sweetly shine.

And now at last my soul has learned
  The thing of all most true—
Ah, deep within my heart 'tis burned,
  That God made you, made you!

In Absence

Tonight there rose a star so fair
Across the misty sea;
And as I watched it burning there
Behold! I gazed at thee!

Each night I shall with eager eyes
Seek out thy blessed face;
And lo! within my heart shall rise
Peace—and an untold grace!

Ships

The ships that are Alaska-bound
  Ride bravely forth against the sky,
And we who watch along the Sound
  And lift our eyes when they go by
  Can only stand and gaze and sigh.

At dawn when all the sea is grey,
  A phantom ship slides through the mist;
And to the northward cuts her way,
  As if to keep a ghostly tryst,
  With some far sea that she has kissed.

At midday when the sun is lord,
  A gleaming ship drives through the deep;
Her prow is like a curvéd sword,
  Slashing the sea with every leap,
  And winning north with valiant sweep.

At twilight when the sky is red,
  A ship of flame, so strange and pale,
Like some poor wand'ring cloud that fled
  The blazing sun, with drooping sail
  Lies calm, forlorn, in night's silk veil.

When moonlight glimmers on the land,
And dances on the silent sea,
A ship, drawn by the night-wind's hand,
Glides like a spirit-shape set free
On through a dim eternity.

The ships that are Alaska-bound
Ride bravely forth against the sky,
And we who watch along the Sound
May never know until we die
Aught else of these ships passing by.

From a High Hill

From this high hill above the city's heart
The day dies splendidly.
No wrack or anguish sees the light depart,
But peace, from off the sea.

Far down, long towers of smoke lean with the wind,
Above the huddled shops;
The sun, blood-orange, glimmers dim behind,
And paints the high hilltops.

The night that gathers thus, silent and swift,
Seems not of day the foe;
But rather some dark mistress come to lift
Day out of human woe.

Sweet-lipped and dreamy-eyed she hovers down,
Her hair in fragrant folds;
And in the fluttering rapture of her gown,
The pallid stars she holds.

Red sun, and whiter light upon the land,
She wraps within her arms;
And lo! the very softness of her hand
Stills all the world's alarms.

By the Way

Five fingers of a maple leaf,
All red and green and brown;
Upturned beside the clean-swept path,
That runs beyond the town.

Think not I do not see thee there,
Nor understand thy call;
I know full well thine every word—
My heart, it keeps them all.

I hear thee say, "Forsake thy toil
And come with me away,
To where the Autumn holds her court,
And paints a brilliant day.

"Where curtains are of shining red,
And carpets are of gold;
Where sun and mist woo every hill,
And fragrance fills the wold.

"Where not a human voice is heard,
Nor any plaint of woe;
No soul cries out against the night,
Nor arm strikes down a foe.

"But one thing speaks—it is a wind,
That blows from heaven's gate;
And all it says is this one song:
'Come, ere it is too late!' "

Five fingers of a maple leaf,
All red and green and brown—
A kindly hand upturned to me,
To lead me from the town.

I would with all my yearning heart
That I might heed thy call;
But I must pass thee rudely by,
And seek a dreary hall.

Song in Absence

When falls the dusk of discontent,
  And the long hours flare and fade
Like dim and distant candle-lights
  The wind has made afraid—
What shall I then seek, O my love?

Shall it be the cool of the western wind,
  Or the sea, with its heavy breath?
The red, mad dance of the sodden soul,
  Or the soft, white sleep of death?
For these kill discontent, my love.

Nay, not for me shall these things serve,
  Though earth grow black as doom.
For I shall sit here quietly
  And see, beyond the gloom,
Thy face's rapture, O my love.

Hic Jacet . . .

Behold this purple evening by the sea!
With far and misty moonlight streaming through;
And western wind that carries light and free
The fragrance of the summer evening's dew.

Ah, cherished hopes that fade out with the stars,
And make our dreams the vague, uncertain lights
We live by, hold but for this hour the bars
That change our brilliant dream-morns into nights!

Be with us yet, ye moons that pierce the dark,
And cross the purple shadows of our days!
For wide the sea is where we must embark,
And few the lights that cheer us on our ways.

Too soon *some* purple evening by the sea
With far and misty moonlight streaming through
Will find us where the west wind loves to be,
And we shall be—but summer evening's dew!

Incident

A clatter in the narrow court,
  The ambulance engine's throb;
Then footsteps, orders—low and short—
  The turning of a knob,
And something to support.

Four men in white—such noiseless men—
  Bear swiftly through the door
The Thing that's covered. Quickly then
  More figures join the four—
The Thing moves on again.

They lay it on a marble space,
  Within four whitened walls;
And then they bare the covered face,
  And lo! about it falls
A mass of golden lace.

It is not hair—the kind we know—
  It falls in folds of light,
Like clouds star-flecked that westward go
  With coming of the night—
All red and gold they glow.

White marble is the table-top,
  And red-gold is her hair;
And in a stream that will not stop
  Red blood runs down her hair,
And stains the marble top.

The white men gather close around,
  And touch her thin, white hands,
That lie across her breast, close-bound
  With long and golden bands
Of hair that they unwound.

One cheek lies bare beneath the hair,
  No more than this revealed;
And pale with Death this cheek—and fair!
  What secret Death concealed
Will hide forever there.

Sonnet to Silence

Silence is sweeter far than any sound,
And dearer than the words we blunder o'er.
What nameless peace we draw from out its
store!
What ecstacy that speech has never found!
And often in such silence I have wound,
With blessed reverence unknown before,
Thy hair about my face—loving thee more
Than any king his queen whom he has
crowned.

So silence is, and we who know its charm
Shall seek within its rapture-halls for peace
And unmarred love that heeds not time nor
place—
The silence-world where fear and loud alarm
Of living, fighting, failing, ever cease—
And I shall wind thy hair about my face.

The Path of No Returning

The sun has laid a path of gold
Across the sober stretch of sea,
And if one walks that path, I'm told,
He is forevermore set free.

No cry of pain can follow him,
Nor can his weary eyes look back;
The years behind grow far and dim—
He sees naught but the golden track.

Where does it lead? Not one can tell;
But this much we can know is true:
That he who follows long and well
Does not come back to me and you!

Thou Temptress, Moon!

Thou Temptress, Moon, so pale across the sea,
With silver, gleaming arms outstretched to me,
While we two walk abroad this summer night!
Ah, Lovely Mistress of the Land of Light,
Thou canst not draw me from the lips of one
Whose very presence thou indeed shouldst shun
For shame and envy to be thus excelled.
These many nights have she and I beheld
Thy lonely splendor from this self-same shore—
Thy radiance mantling her whom I adore,
And blending lips and eyes and tangled hair
Into a lovely and a fragrant snare
For such a heart as mine. So, Temptress pale,
Thy beauty is not all without avail.
We leave thee thus—thy gleaming arms still spread
Across the sea, thy gently drooping head
Soft-cushioned in the blankets of the sky—
But we shall see thee more—My Love and I.

Through My Latticed Window

My latticed window opens on the street,
And when night closes in upon the day,
I listen at my window for the feet
Of one who climbs the hill to pass this way.

And, waiting here, I catch the lilac's smell,
And hear the rolling melody of surf—
The pines above the house have cast their spell
In lengthening shadows on the wild-grown turf.

Dear Heart, the day has not been all misspent
If you but keep the promise of your eyes
And follow here the lilac's magic scent
To take my latticed window by surprise.

Look, Love, upon the Sea

Look, Love, upon the sea—
The ripples, moonlit from the brow of heaven,
The high and lighted places through yon tree,
Where holy whiteness hangs,
And there is no discord!
One solemn breath that lingers as a sigh
From lips half parted—spoke to one adored—
A sigh, and that is all.

Yet, Love, beyond the sea,
Beyond the whitened ripples and the light,
Where such a night as this can never be,
Are dark, eternal woes!
Are far and misty places!
Where cold unloveliness sojourns, and love
Is stranger. See, the hideous, mist-blown faces
Look out upon us now!

Love, let us leave the sea—
Leave far behind the agony of sin,
From deathlike visions of the cold mist flee
And seek the high hills' peace,
The tall pines' quietness!
It is a darksome world—beyond this place—
And lest the one of us should love the less,
Come! Let us leave the sea!

Thoughts on a Spring Night

Light air of the spring-born night,
Smoke-haze of the softening light,
And the day gives up its strength.
Shops darken—doors swing to;
Footsteps dwindle to a few,
And I walk the dim street's length.

Yellow-blue and yellow-grey—
These are the dying tints of day.
Misty-dim are the city's lamps—
Misty-dim from the mellow damps,
And down the dim and yellow way
I pass.

Beloved, if thou were but here!
The mist-dimmed night would then grow clear,
The unnamed stars, love-born, would shine,
And this dull air become rich wine
To drown ourselves in! . . . Ah, a tear,
Instead.

Fire of the Desert

The sun set red tonight!
And oh, if thou had stood
With me beneath that light
Which flamed above the sand,
Thou could have understood
Things I now understand—
The sun set red tonight!

The sun set red tonight!
And all the purple mist—
That mist of our delight—
Grew rose-red on the hills,
And all the clouds were kissed
And made red as the hills—
The sun set red tonight!

The sun set red tonight!
And as I saw the world
Flame red beneath the light
I saw two hearts of youth
Blend rose-red with the world—
The rose-red world of youth—
The sun set red tonight!

Spring Morn

Out of the East, grown grey,
  Silently, Dawn was born.
Out of the Dawn grew Day,
  Blossoming into Morn.

Lo! as the young Morn breathed,
  All of the sweet flowers woke,
Shaking the perfumed dew
  Loose from their velvet cloak.

Petals of peach-bloom fell
  Fluttering on the wings,
Light wings of East-blown winds—
  Winds that the warm Dawn brings.

So, as the young Morn came,
  Flower-folk, passion-wrung,
Loving too much, drooped low,
  Quivered, then fell, far-flung.

E'en so did my full heart—
  Gift of the budding Spring—
Open to welcome Morn,
  Of him did my soul sing.

My heart—as fallen flowers—
  When the Morn's soft breath came
Laden with drowsy love,
  Withered from love's own flame.

Out of the West, grown grey,
  Silently, Night was born.
Night, he who brings the Day,
  Blossoming into Morn.

A Tent-light on the Desert

Desert night! and all the red
And gold of desert day has fled,
Leaving the sands—
Those changing sands—
As cold and dreary as the dead,
In desert night.

Solitude! not e'en the wind
Dares break the desert spells which bind
The silent sands—
Night, desert sands—
And in them shall I never find
But solitude?

Thy tent-light! ah, there it gleams
Afar in desert night, its beams
Thrown o'er the sands—
Night, desert sands—
Beloved, I shall seek in dreams
Thy far tent-light!

Three Kisses

Three kisses are to each man given,
  Three, and only three.
Each kiss is one third part of heaven;
  The soul is but these three.

The first is at the mother's breast,
  The kiss of birth;
The second is love's kiss, the best,
  (We know love's worth);
The third is death's kiss, white and blest,
  Farewell to earth.

Like Death

Sometimes when I have looked upon the sea,
In moonlight, or beneath the brighter sun,
I have been moved to say, "That is like
Death."
An endless, governed restlessness of waves,
Lapping the myriad sands of unknown shores,
And yet a heavy liquid peace within,
A strong, strange bosom of eternity.

Sometimes, too, I have looked upon the land,
When miracles of seed have hailed the spring,
And then, too, have I said, "That is like
Death."
A bursting from the embryo of Life,
Into the fulness of a thousand fruits,
The radiant flowering of the obscure spark
Into a world of God-like magnitude.

Again, I have looked straight into the sun,
And, blinded by its universal light,
I have said to myself, "That is like Death."
A space which body never can traverse,
A vast, exultant rhythm, and a warmth
Which clutches at the soul, and draws it in,
Uniting it forever with its fire.

Night Song

I am braiding my hair in the dark, O my love,
And the touch of my hands on the sweet-
smelling strands
Sings a song in the dark, O my love.

There's a wind, a wild wind, on the sea, O my
love,
And a storm on the hill,that I fear may blow
ill—
Ill to you and to me, O my love.

I am ever afraid when I wait, O my love,
And I turn down the light, for my eyes they
are bright—
Oh, so bright when I wait, O my love.

I have let down my hair, soft and sweet, O my
love,
And it covers me well, like a shield from a
spell,
And it kisses my feet, O my love.

I am braiding it now in two strands, O my
love,
And I pray that this night it may wind itself
tight
O'er your face and your hands, O my love.

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